

and paddy. The Travancore ports continued to attract more ships and the percentage of sea-borne trade, foreign and coasting, to the total volume of external trade in 1104 was 32.30 against 31.02 in 1103. The

Shipping. number of vessels that called at all our four ports together during the year was 822 with a total tonnage of nearly 1.26 millions, against 607 vessels with an aggregate tonnage of 0.972 million in the previous year. The number of steamers increased from 403 to 525 and of country craft from 204 to 296. At Alleppey alone, 420 steamers, of which 162 were ocean-going steamers, called in 1104, against 342 steamers, of which 78 were ocean-going, in 1103. At Colachel too, the number of steamers rose from 24 in 1103 to 39 in 1104. The increase at Colachel was mainly due to greater exports of ilmenite and at the other ports to the larger imports of rice and paddy.

Agriculture.

9. The year disclosed somewhat disquieting conditions as to the position of our indigenous products. The price of many of them fell appreciably. The produce of the cocoanut tree, rubber and even tea began to fall in price. Paddy came down in price by about 30 per cent. Tapioca which ordinarily forms the staple food of the poorer classes of the people and the raising of which is the profession of a large proportion of the agricultural population in the State followed suit. Copra and cocoanut oil have to meet the competition of cheaper palm nuts and oils which are now partly taking their place. Increasing the yield will have been gratified to note the obvious remedy for the evil. Better manures. The majority of them, however, are the means that should be employed. The Government is making facilities to members for borrowing. Workers and varieties of co-operation must recognise that their object should be to form societies that will help the agriculturist and the small industrialist to avail themselves of improved methods of work and more profitable ways of selling the products of their labour and to provide better housing and sanitary conditions in congested villages. That public attention has already been directed to this aspect of the question is clear from the proceedings of the All-Travancore Co-operative Conference recently held at Quilon. The Government too have instructed the Registrar of Co-operative Societies to devote special attention to that side of the movement.

Joint Stock Companies.

14. The enthusiasm for company promotion noticed in 1103 continued in 1104, ninety-eight new companies being registered during the year. The number is the highest on record since 1095 in which year 101 companies were registered. No less than 74 of the new companies were banks. In spite of the large number of banks that now exist, there is a complaint that our agriculture and industries are not getting adequate banking facilities. This question is being investigated by the Banking Enquiry Committee that has quite opportunely been formed recently.